Project **M**anagement **O**ffice

Quality Assurance Plan
for
Grants, Contracts, and Loans
Management System

Revision #1.2

Office of Financial Management

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this Quality Assurance Plan is to define the techniques, procedures, and methodologies that will be used by the Grants, Contracts, and Loans Management (GCLM) system project. Experienced Quality Assurance (QA) consultant(s) will help assure that the GCLM system project is successfully planned, executed, and implemented.

Scope

The QA consultant(s) will:

- Work with the project's Executive Sponsors, Statewide Financial Systems Manager, and Project Manager on an on-going basis to provide advice, direction, and informal reporting on operational and project assessments.

- Provide independent customers and other stakeholder feedback (anonymously, if appropriate) to Executive Sponsors, the Statewide Financial Systems Manager, and the Project Manager.

- Provide quality assurance for the project. OFM anticipates approximately twenty to thirty (20 to 30) hours of effort per monthly period.

- Provide independent and objective reviews of the project, its progress, and any difficulties including, but not limited to, an assessment of the quality of deliverables.

- Provide a common source of reliable independent information to those charged with the oversight of project.

- Perform periodic reviews, analysis and written feedback of the project, and related activities to assure that effective project planning, management, risk assessment, and project controls are being applied to assure project success.

- Provide at least monthly reports to the Executive Sponsors, Statewide Financial Systems Manager, and Project Manager. The frequency of meetings may be adjusted by the project activities, to be determined by Executive Sponsor and Statewide Financial Systems Manager.

Assessments will include such items as:

- **Adequacy of executive awareness of the project.** Do executives understand the issues and risks facing the project? Does the project have an active, involved executive sponsor?

- **Completeness of Vision and Scope definition.** Do all participants (customers, project team, and executives) have a unified understanding of the vision and scope of the project? Is the project adhering to that vision/scope? Are project objectives clear and well understood?

- **Adequacy of risks assessments and mitigation plans.** Are risks being systematically identified and planned for the project?

- **Adequacy of staffing and role definition.** Is the project adequately staffed and does the staff understand their roles and responsibilities? Is staff adequately trained?

- **Adequacy of work/task planning.** Is the project following a disciplined approach? Is a realistic project plan being maintained and followed? Are products being delivered on schedule? Are costs within budget? Does staff understand the plan?

- **Adequacy of project control procedures.** Are adequate measures/techniques in place for scope/change management, issue resolution, project communications, status assessment, and reporting?

- **Constructive involvement of customers.** Are stakeholders or customers adequately involved in the project planning, development, acceptance, and delivery?

- **Work product assessment.** Are the work products of good quality? If necessary, have agencies had sufficient involvement in the work product?

The QA consultant(s) shall:

- An initial baseline assessment report of the project and plans with recommendations for OFM

- Proposed Quality Assurance work plan, with estimated hours

- Monthly reports and presentations to the sponsors, managers, and other key stakeholders specifying findings, conclusions, and recommendations

from the previous period, and proposed work plan for the ensuing two-month period for approval.

- Monthly joint meetings with the Executive Sponsor, Statewide Financial Systems Manager, and Project Manager, and individually with the Project Manager to review project assessments, issues, risks, observations, advice, etc. The frequency of meetings may be adjusted based on the project activities, to be determined by Executive Sponsor and Statewide Financial Systems Manager.

- On-going document of open issues and risks

- Periodic assistance in the facilitation of planning activities.

Background

In 2004, the Washington State central services agencies began the *Roadmap* for Washington State Financial and Administrative Policies, Processes, Systems and Data (*Roadmap*). The *Roadmap* is a collaborative effort among state agencies to create a comprehensive plan to meet the Governor and Legislature's demands for better information, improved management systems, and streamlined business processes and policies. More information about the *Roadmap's* four-year history is located on the *Roadmap* website at http://www.ofm.wa.gov/roadmap/default.htm.

In February 2007, the project published the *Roadmap* Core Financial Systems Feasibility Study located at http://www.ofm.wa.gov/roadmap/feasbilitystudy/FeasibilityStudyFinalVolume1.pdf. The study recommends twelve "positioning activities" (p. 62) to help reduce risk and increase the usefulness of whatever future financial and administrative solution approach the state may select. The positioning activities will help position the state for future change, will shore up the back office business of government, and will provide a sound basis through needed project preparation, planning, and 'deck-clearing'. The GCLM system project is one of the twelve positioning activities. The feasibility study recommends completing these activities before moving forward with a financial and administrative solution.

The Office of Financial Management (OFM), in collaboration with the Departments of Ecology and Community, Trade, and Economic Development (CTED) has initiated an enterprise project for a solution to help manage grants, contracts, and loans. CTED and Ecology control and disburse millions of dollars in grants and loans. Money from both agencies is often needed to help local governments pay for large projects, such as sewage treatment plants. However, how can

communities easily search for grant and loan opportunities? In addition, what if a legislator or citizen wants a clear and instant picture of how much was spent and what was achieved in, say, a specific community?

Our customers – the people who might want to apply for grants and loans – have no fast, clear picture of what money is available. They must check with each of the individual programs in Ecology and CTED. There are no centralized, access to the information, on-line, they need. In addition, every time they apply, they must provide much of the same information in each application and repeat the steps they may have already taken. This is not the business-friendly, efficient process envisioned by the Governor, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC), or the recent Berk & Associates study.

And to be sure, Ecology and CTED can always answer questions, but it takes time. It can mean pulling together information scattered in spreadsheets, contract amendments, and memos across the two agencies. In short, a clear picture often has to be custom made. This is not the kind of accountability sought by Governor Gregoire, JLARC, or the two agencies.

Ecology must replace its aging Contracts and Grants Payable system that processed transactions totaling $392 million in the 2003-2005 biennium. An enterprise system and improved business practices are also critical to the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development, which distributes 93% of its $500 million biennial budget through grants, contracts, and loans using manual procedures, spreadsheets, and multiple systems.

OFM will lead the effort, joined by the ECY and CTED as the first customers of the new system. After an initial implementation at ECY and CTED, it is expected that the system will be scaled to serve as an enterprise system for Washington State agencies. The system will automate end-to-end grants, contracts, and loans management business processes and provide a clear view across the entire state of where money was distributed and what was achieved.

Once the GCLM system has scaled to an enterprise level for Washington State, it is anticipated the proposed system will handle in excess of 250,000 contract documents and related data per year. It is OFM's estimation that the system will handle an infinite number of electronic versions of signed contracts and related data elements and in excess of 75,000 state agency and vendor/contractor users.

Washington State Information technology projects may require oversight from the Department of Information Systems (DIS) and Information Services Board (ISB). The GCLM Investment Plan has been approved by DIS and the ISB. The project has been evaluated as having a high-severity level and high-risk level, meriting an oversight level of three (3). Level three (3) oversight requires ISB and DIS approval of the Investment Plan, incremental release of project funds, and regular updates to the DIS Technology Management Consultant and ISB.

Quality Checkpoints

Project Planning
QA work plan depicting the QA deliverables, milestones, and tasks.

Schedule Management
Review and monitor plans including cost, schedule, and resources. Include and independent analysis of this information in monthly reports.

Issue Management
Proactive recommendations in advance of an actual problem. Provide early warning signals to the project team throughout the project. Significant project issues that potentially affect schedule, resources, ad quality will be appropriately communicated and documented. High-risk issues will be tracked and communicated in monthly reports.

Risk Management
Identify potential risks to successful project completion, mitigation options, and responsibility for corrective action. Risks and mitigation recommendations will be reviewed with the Project Manager and Executive Steering Committee and reported in monthly reports.

Quality Management
Select deliverables to independently review and provide recommendations for improvement based upon best practices and experience. Coordination with Project Manager and Executive Steering Committee will determine the appropriate deliverables to review.

User Readiness Assessments
Visit users to ascertain whether they are receiving adequate support from the project team and are making progress in readying their operations for the new system.

Project Reporting
Written monthly reports for the project team, governance bodies, and State management addressing QA Assessment of Project Activities and

Assessment Ratings, Progress and Deliverable Status Overview, Financial and Resource Management Status, Issues and Risks, Recommendations, Proposed Work Plan for the following two-month period.

Executive Steering Committee
Participate in the monthly steering committee meetings or other governance body and present the monthly written report.

Meet with State Management and Steering Committee Members
Regularly meet with the Executive Sponsors, Statewide Financial Systems Manager, and Project Manager at least monthly to discuss overall project status, issues, and recommendations.

Project Team and user Interviews
Conduct interviews with project staff and department users to review project activities, progress, and issues.

Staffing

Roles and Responsibilities

External QA Consultant

Robert Fuller, *Primary, Pacific Consulting Group*
Tim Easton, *Secondary, Pacific Consulting Group*

- Work with the project's Executive Sponsors, Statewide Financial Systems Manager, and Project Manager on an on-going basis to provide advice, direction, and informal reporting on operational and project assessments.
- Provide independent customers and other stakeholder feedback (anonymously, if appropriate) to Executive Sponsors, the Statewide Financial Systems Manager, and the Project Manager.
- Provide quality assurance for the GCLM system project. OFM anticipates approximately twenty to thirty (20 to 30) hours of effort per monthly period.
- Provide independent and objective reviews of the project, its progress, and any difficulties including, but not limited to, an assessment of the quality of deliverables. The Contractor will provide a common source of reliable independent information to those charged with the oversight of project.
- Perform periodic reviews, analysis and written feedback of the GCLM system project, and related activities to assure that

effective project planning, management, risk assessment, and project controls are being applied to assure project success.
- Provide at least monthly reports to the Executive Sponsors, Statewide Financial Systems Manager, and Project Manager. The frequency of meetings may be adjusted by the project activities, to be determined by Executive Sponsor and Statewide Financial Systems Manager.

Project Manager

Doug Beam, *Accounting Division, Statewide Financial Systems Unit, OFM*

Management
- Performs a key communication role with Design team, Planning team Executive Sponsor, and Executive Steering Committee
- Manages resource allocation
- Coordinates the team's daily activities
- Drives critical decisions
- Drives risk and change management processes
- Defines funding strategy

Project
- Oversees planning and analysis process
- Oversees the functional specification development
- Oversees the design process
- Implements change control which includes requirements, functional specifications, design, and report specifications
- Creates, manages, and monitors the master schedule
- Tracks project progress and manages status reporting
- Ensures the delivery of a quality product
- Gauges and monitors organization readiness
- Performs cost control by monitoring expenses against the budget
- Ensures stakeholders and sponsors are adequately involved

Communications
- Manages communications with all affected stakeholders

Prioritizing
- Makes major project decisions

Issues
- Manages issues and risks through risk monitoring and control and issues monitoring and control

Product Manager/Consultants

Owen Barbeau, *Accounting Division, Statewide Financial Systems Unit, OFM*
Rick Castro, *Accounting Division, Statewide Financial Systems Unit, OFM*
Jason Henderson, *CTED*
Liz Saylor, *Ecology*

Project
- Establishes and maintains business case for the product
- Develops and embraces the vision statement
- Ensures that the entire business process is taken into consideration
- Understands how project/system is integrated with the complete business process
- Looks for ways to maximize product features and capacity for the available resources
- Strives to improve business processes before and as part of system design
- Assists in design and development
- Makes process-related policy decisions that affect the project
- Clarifies policy and statutory requirements
- Ensures the delivery of a quality product

Communications
- Manages communications with all affected stakeholders
- Ensures business expectations are articulated and understood by the project team
- Communicates both business and user requirements to the team and stakeholders
- Markets application to other agencies

Requirements
- Develops agency program inventory and baseline documentation
- Works with OFM Product Manager and Agency program staff to analyze business requirements and produce functional designs
- Performs business and system analysis
- Gathers and prioritizes business requirements
- Writes the system and functional requirements with input from other team leaders
- Designs program enhancements
- Designs agency reports

Prioritizing

- Ensures that the needs of all customers are met, to the extent possible within project scope, schedule and resource constraints
- Prioritizes features and exception fixes
- Manages agency change requests

Testing and Stabilization
- Reviews test plans and test cases
- Participates in usability acceptance testing

User Education and Training
- Organizes and conducts demonstrations to customer groups
- Develops user aids such as quick reference cards and tutorials
- Creates training plan
- Develops training materials
- Conducts training

Developer

Travis Nation, *Accounting Division, Statewide Financial Systems Unit, OFM*

Management
- Provides regular development status reports to the Project Manager
- Builds proof of concept prototypes
- Provides design and construction estimates to Project Manager
- Coordinates development effort

Project
- Develops and maintains development schedule
- Ensures the delivery of a quality product
- Participates actively in the creation and review of the system and functional specifications
- Works in concert with Product Manager/Consultant to understand business, system, and functional requirements
- Works with Testers and Product Manager/Consultant to ensure a quality product
- Develops plans for rollout, installation, and support for the operational system

Technical
- Builds a solution which meets the system and functional specifications

- Produces clear and complete design documentation prior to product construction
- Develops, builds, and/or configures the product
- Develops and manages logical software and documentation version control strategy
- Addresses and fixes exceptions in a timely manner

Testing and Stabilization
- Reviews testing plans and test cases

Communication
- Facilitates communication between Product Manager/Consultants
- Communicates problems with business, system, functional requirements to Manager/Consultants and team
- Communicates with Manager/Consultants when additional knowledge or clarification is needed for business, system, functional requirements understanding

Tester/Internal QA

Christi Johnson, *Accounting Division, Statewide Financial Systems Unit, OFM*

Management
- Provides regular testing status to the Project Manager
- Provides Project Manager with estimates for developing test cases, data, and test execution

Project
- Develops and maintains testing schedule
- Works with Developers, Product Managers/Consultants, and Contract staff to ensure delivery of a quality product
- Ensures the system complies with system and functional specifications
- Ensures the product is production ready

Communication
- Communicates issues to the team and provides team with the previous workday's issues report during the daily stand-up
- Facilitates communication between Product Managers/Consultants and Contract Testers
- Communicates problems with business, system, functional requirement to Product Managers/Consultants
- Communicates with Product Managers/Consultants when additional knowledge or clarification is needed for business, system, functional requirement understanding

Roles and Responsibilities
- Coordinates testing effort

Testing and Stabilization
- Prepares test plan and cases
- Provides test cases for review
- Tracks exceptions
- Analyzes exception statistics

Required Skills

Mandatory Experience and Qualifications:

The consultant(s) must have:

- Five years of verifiable experience conducting project Quality Assurance Assessments.
- Experience providing quality assurance assessments for an enterprise initiative.

Highly Desired Experience and Qualifications:

- Familiarity with the operation of Washington State Government and its Central Service Agencies.
- Experience providing quality assurance services for enterprise agreement management projects.
- Experience with government grants, contracts, and loans management.
- Experience with government procurement processes and procurement reform.
- Knowledge of change management and policy development.

Reviews

Quality Assessments and Reviews
- Recommendations will identify high priority recommendations for the reporting period. Use a supporting document to supplement any summary information.
- QA observations
- Communications results
- Current QA activities that describe the major quality assurance activities accomplished during this reporting period.

Planned Activities for Next Review Period
Describe Planned Activities for the next review interval.

Project Risk Assessment and Trends

Describe the observed and identified risk areas within the project and the trend of that risk (improving, worsening, or no change) as well as impacts of the risks.

Risk Mitigation Recommendations
Identify the steps or actions to address the trends.

Outstanding QA Issues
Describe the new and unresolved issues from previous reports.

Other Findings
Record other findings not already noted above.

About the Quality Assurance Provider/Vendor
Identify who prepared the report, their credentials, the method of preparation, and any necessary report context.

Resource Estimates

The **Pacific Consulting Group** contract for this project is **$110,000** for the period **December 2007** through **June 2009**.

Contractor Controls

The Project Manager will monitor the deliverables and work products as outlined in the project schedule.

Corrective Action

Process
Any issues identified during project processes and identified in the QA reviews will follow the Issue Management Plan.

Any risks identified during project processes and identified in the QA reviews will follow the Risk Management Plan.

Appendix A – Revision History

Revision	Date	Author	Description of change
1.0	9/10/2007	Doug Beam	Created
1.1	3/24/2008	Doug Beam	Added Rick Castro.
1.2	7/28/08	Anwar Wilson	Changed Susan Dodson to Owen Barbeau.